United Nations A/62/PV.1

General Assembly
Sixty-second session

Official Records

1st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 18 September 2007, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the session by the President of the General Assembly

The President: I declare open the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President: In accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure, I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Statement by the President

The President: Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, distinguished guests, friends: it is my privilege and honour to welcome all of you to the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. I would like to thank you all for your contributions towards the work programme for this session. You have asked me to show leadership, and I will do it.

Before outlining the major priorities for this session, I would first like to congratulate President Al-Khalifa for her energetic and honest leadership during the sixty-first session. I would particularly like to commend her for the thematic debates she convened. I intend to develop that practice and widen our global outreach.

I would also like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his close support during the transition period. Together we will continue to work with common purpose to renew, modernize and strengthen the Organization so that it can rise to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

More than ever before, global challenges demand multilateral solutions. The United Nations is the appropriate multilateral forum to take action. That is why the revitalization of the General Assembly deserves our greatest attention. To revitalize this House is also to renew our faith in each other, our common values and destiny. True revitalization will only happen if together we address, among other things, the five priority issues that, in consultation with the Member States, I have identified: climate change, financing for development, achieving the Millennium Development Goals, countering terrorism, and the reform agenda to renew the management, effectiveness and coherence of the Organization.

(*spoke in French*)

Climate change will be the first of the five priority issues on which the Assembly will focus. The challenges posed by climate change are so far-reaching and their impacts so dramatic and varied that we cannot afford to wait any longer. Science has spoken, and the time to act has come. On 24 September 2007,

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heads of State will have an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment in this regard here at the United Nations, for the United Nations will be the main stage for debate and action. Only a global forum can meet a global problem.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which is the keystone of our efforts, will be supplemented by other ongoing initiatives. I hope that the General Assembly will make a considerable contribution to the debate by strengthening political will and cohesion.

However, climate change is not just a matter of the environment; in itself it clearly illustrates the major linkages between environmental problems and development issues. Development will be sustainable or it will not. It requires both broad participation on the part of all stakeholders —especially non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector — and better international environmental governance.

That leads me to the issue of development, which is the second pillar that I would like to address as a matter of priority during the sixty-second session. Time is against us. The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) will not, for the most part, be reached, especially in Africa. We are facing an emergency situation today. I ask Member States to provide us with the means to address it.

(*spoke in English*)

Financing for development is a priority. I will convene an informal meeting of the plenary on 20 September to discuss innovative approaches and preparations for the high-level dialogue. I also appeal for the ongoing support of Member States as we move on to Doha in 2008.

It is also imperative during the sixty-second session that we comprehensively review progress on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Achieving the MDGs is not solely a test of our ability to deliver on our promises; it is, above all, a test of our moral obligations and the values that are enshrined in the Charter. That is why, in consultation with the Secretary-General, I intend to work closely with heads of State and Government to hold an MDG leaders' meeting here at the United Nations during this session.

Because global action is urgently needed, the high-level events on children and HIV/AIDS, and progress to strengthen the Organization's gender equality architecture, will take on additional significance.

The General Assembly must take the initiative and strengthen its central position in the multilateral system. We must use every opportunity to spread our message. We must forge a lasting consensus — a global alliance for action — by bringing together Member States, the private sector, NGOs and civil society. In doing so, we can also help to overcome the underlying misunderstanding between cultures and religions that is at the core of many of today's problems. In that context, the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace will provide an additional opportunity.

We can further support those objectives and promote human security by strengthening the Peacebuilding Commission and making progress on the disarmament agenda.

By promoting peace, human rights and the rule of law we can make the world a fairer and more equitable place. Progress on those issues and on development will reduce instability and the threat of terrorism. That is a win-win situation for us all.

Reviewing the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy will also be a priority during this session. We need to ensure that we are properly prepared both as an Organization and within our national jurisdictions. I also call on all members to make substantive progress on the terrorism convention and to send a strong signal that we stand united in confronting terrorism.

If we want the United Nations to play its full role, we will have to do more and do it more effectively — both operationally at the country level and with regard to management at Headquarters. We also need the courage to move to a new stage leading to concrete results on Security Council reform. Together, we have to further strengthen the Organization's capabilities.

As President Al-Khalifa recognized, we are confronted with widening gaps in our ability to deliver on important issues — issues that are vital not only to the future relevance of the Organization but also to the global public that we serve. Modernizing our management and implementing greater coherence across the system will enable the Organization to

deliver better results on all the priorities I have outlined. To achieve that we all have a responsibility to seek out bold compromises. We must strive to build a system of international relations based on multilateral cooperation, mutual respect and international law. We can achieve that only through open and transparent working practices. That is the only way I know of to build lasting political consensus.

May I thank you once again for the responsibility and trust that you have placed in me. I can assure you that I stand ready to serve the values and principles of the Organization.

As we take our first steps together at this session, I would like to leave you to consider the wise words of George Bernard Shaw:

> "I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them." (*Mrs. Warren's Profession, Act II*)

In the coming months, I will count on your wholehearted support to create the circumstances we need as, together, we chart the course that this Organization must take to build bridges towards a better future.

Item 134 of the provisional agenda

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/62/342)

The President: Next, I would like, in keeping with established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/62/342. It contains a letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which he informs the Assembly that seven Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I would like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years".

May I therefore take it that the General Assembly takes note of the information contained in document A/62/342?

It was so decided.

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Credentials of representatives to the sixty-second session of the General Assembly

(a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

The President: Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly, at the beginning of each session, shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

Accordingly, it is proposed that for the sixty-second session the Credentials Committee should consist of the following Member States: Angola, Chile, China, Namibia, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Suriname, Switzerland and the United States of America.

May I take it that the States I have mentioned are hereby appointed members of the Credentials Committee?

It was so decided.

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Letter dated 13 September 2007 from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/62/338)

The President: Members are aware that, pursuant to section 1, paragraph 7, of resolution 40/243, no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly should be permitted to meet at United Nations Headquarters during the main part of a regular session of the Assembly, unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

On the strict understanding that meetings would have to be accommodated within available facilities and services, authorization is thus sought for the following subsidiary organs: the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the Working Group on the Financing of the

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, the Administrative Tribunal, the Executive Board of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, and the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to authorize those subsidiary organs of the Assembly to meet during the main part of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.